

ANTIQUITY

OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

THE APOSTOLICAL FOUNDATION AND SETTLEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF CHRIST IN BRITAIN—

THE FLOURISHING STATE OF THE EARLY BRITISH CHURCH, AND HER INDEPENDENCE OF FOREIGN CONTRoul DURING THE FIRST SIX CENTURIES OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA,—

HER STRONG PROTEST AGAINST THE FAITH AND RELIGION INTRODUCED INTO ENGLAND BY THE MONK AUGUSTINE AND HIS FOLLOWERS,—AND

HER LONG RESISTANCE TO THE ENCROACHMENTS OF THE BISHOP OF ROME ON THE TERRITORY AND JURISDICTION OF THE BISHOPS OF ENGLAND,

SHEWN IN

A LECTURE

DELIVERED

AT THE NATIONAL SCHOOL-ROOM, BIRMINGHAM,

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LECTURE.

As there is no point of English history more interesting and edifying than that of the origin and progress of Christianity here, so there is none on which, unhappily, more wilful ignorance or reckless misconception prevails; I might add, culpable indifference and apathy, too, even among those whose literary attainments or rank in the Church should have taught them better, especially at such a crisis as the present. Writers of our national annals, if they condescend at all to touch the subject, dismiss it with but a passing notice; even ecclesiastical historians and biographers begin their relations with the first appearance of a Roman Missionary here in the seventh century, as if all beyond this were a blank; as though, during the 600 years that preceded this era, all traces of a Christian Church in this island were so faint, dark, confused, and indiscernible, as not to deserve the research of the historian or the attention of his reader. "As though it were here as it is in some mines, where the ore is so mixed with the dross, so little, and so inaccessible, as not to compensate for the trouble of digging and refining it."

Hence the vulgar notion, or rather *deception*, that the Roman Austin was the first that preached the Gospel in Britain; and hence the conclusion is drawn, that as the British Church *owed her foundation to*, so she was ever, till the time of the Reformation, *dependent upon* the see of Rome. This is the *trap* of the Papist—the *delusion* of the ignorant Protestant—the *cant* of the anti-churchman—and the *snare* into which the political partisan would inveigle all who are simple and willing enough to be misled by him. Every little pretender to knowledge, as soon as he can repeat the name of Austin, affects to think himself possessed of irresistible proof that he was the apostle of our island; and that, as the Roman *Missionaries* were the first to make known to us the way of life, so the *Roman Bishop* has an indefeasible claim to be for ever the lord and master of God's heritage all over this kingdom. The conclusion is as mischievous as it is absurd. As though, even if a missionary of the Pope of Rome had been the first herald of the Gospel here, or even if, Christianity having decayed here, he had been the first to revive its fire, the Church of England was, therefore, bound to wallow for ever in Rome's impurities—love for ever her delusions—hug for ever her chains—be for ever her blind, admiring, uncomplaining slave. He who can be caught by such an argument as this is a

most worthy subject of the Papal yoke ; it would be almost a pity to say anything which might tend to separate the master and the slave.

But what shall we say, after all, if the only merit Rome can claim is, not that of lighting or re-kindling the lamp of Christianity in this land, but that of tarnishing her native lustre—gradually corrupting her creed—heathenising her discipline and worship—enslaving her clergy—making merchandise of the souls of her people—turning this kingdom into the principal limb of the “man of sin’s” usurped empire, and, as she had enslaved all, so causing all to drink deeply and intoxicatingly of the cup of her enchantments?

But that this is all the obligation the Church of England owes to that of Papal Rome is the matter of fact, as it stands out on the very face of the history of her dealings with us. This I am entitled, I think, to say, from the evidence already submitted to you in former lectures ; and the purpose of the present, as you are all aware, is to add to this evidence, by proving from facts, in opposition to interested misrepresentation, popular ignorance, apathy, and misconception, that there was in Britain a REGULAR EPISCOPAL, INDEPENDENT, CHRISTIAN CHURCH, OF APOSTOLIC FOUNDATION, *subsisting for nearly six successive centuries before the Roman, Austin, set foot on our shore, or the voice of a spiritual usurper was heard in our churches.* This evidence I will lay before you in the following order :—

Firstly, that the Church of England was founded, not only during the lifetime of the apostles, but by an apostle or apostles *in person*. Secondly—The evidence we have that Paul was its founder. Thirdly—That the celestial fire, thus deposited on our altars, never expired ; but burned brightly and increasingly till, in the seventh century, the British Church, on her first acquaintance *with*, rejected the arrogant pretensions and corruptions *of* the Church of Rome. Fourthly—The reasons and grounds of this rejection, as proving the purity of the Church in England at that time. Lastly—That, even when Saxon idolatry did, for a while, intrude upon and oppress the Church here, it was not the Romish missionaries after all, but the clergy of the old national Church, and Irish missionaries from the island of I-Columb-Kill, who converted the Saxon settlers, and reduced the kingdoms of the Heptarchy to the obedience of Christ. *The emissaries of the Pope only intruded upon and usurped their labours.* (a)

These, then, are the *facts* to which I now solicit your attention. First—*Some* (for I can only give a sketch) of the evidence we have that the Church in England is of apostolic foundation.

(1.)—I set out with the observation that this would have been highly probable, even if we had no direct ancient testimony on the subject ; probable from many considerations—first, from the easy and frequent intercourse between Britain and Rome during the lifetime of the apostles ; but secondly and more especially from the vast number, not only of Romans, but also of other foreigners, trafficking in Britain, settled in Britain, and serving in the armies in Britain. In the year of our Lord 43, Britain was reduced to a regular province of the Roman empire ; and, a few years after this, we find that there were so many foreigners in England, that in one year (61) no less than 70,000 of them perished in an insurrection of the natives. At this

of Seneca, the philosopher, that he amassed a property in the island to the amount of £300,000. on the lowest calculation. Now, my brethren, we know from the New Testament alone, (to say nothing of the facts of profane history,) that our blessed Christianity had at this time spread itself mightily abroad in the world. At Rome, we know, there were zealous Christians even amongst the higher orders of the state—yea, even in the *Palace*—amongst the members of the Imperial household. Mark this quotation—Paul, writing from Rome to the Philippians (iv. 22) has these words:—“*All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cæsar’s household.*” We know from the nature of the thing, from facts and experience, that a *new, despised, calumniated, persecuted* religion does not all at once climb up and ramify among the higher orders of the state—especially, when the powers that be are its chief leading enemies and persecutors. Hence, then, we infer that Christianity at Rome must have shot her roots deeply down, and spread them far, among the lower orders of society, by the time she had so shot her branches up among the higher classes as to have her converts—her saints—even among the lordly officers of the imperial household. Let us just add to these remarks what even heathen history tells us, that in the reign of Nero, about the year 64, when, by public decree, search was made for the Christians, “vast, indeed, was the multitude (*ingens multitudo*) which was apprehended of that pernicious sect,” as Tacitus and others then called the Christians in their ignorance. Now, then, brethren, though we should suppose that of those Britons whom *business, curiosity, fashion, pleasure* would bring to Rome, none caught a glimpse of the Gospel, can it be for one moment imagined that of the vast numbers of foreigners, not only from the west, but also from the east, (the birth-place, remember, cradle, and starting-point of Christianity,) campaigning,—trading,—*settled* in Britain, there were found no professors of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus? I think we cannot admit the supposition; and if there were amongst them such professors, as it is almost certain there were, then, I ask again, are we to suppose they did not possess *zeal, piety, courage* enough, (as they all did in that age,) to say a word for their Master, to feel “their spirit stirred within them,” when they saw whole families, tribes, provinces given to the most shocking and revolting idolatries? Were they not bold enough to let fall, in the dark and cruel places they passed through, some of that heavenly fire which, they knew, had been deposited with them not more for their *own* than *others’* use? Here, again, the mind starts back from such a supposition. So that you see with what strong probabilities the question of the early origin of Christianity in Britain comes recommended before you; so much so, in fact, that it is a very prevailing opinion among writers who have examined into these matters, that Christianity was planted here within four year’s after our Lord’s crucifixion. But we rest not upon probabilities, however strong, or opinions, however prevalent; we have direct, unquestionable testimony on the subject. Some of which I now proceed to state.

(2)—Gildas, the earliest Christian writer of this country, whose works have come down to us, (born 511) has left us on record the fact, “that the cheering beams of the true Sun—the Sun of Right-

cold of heathenism and idolatry, a little before the defeat of Boadicea by the Roman legions,"—an event which occurred A.D. 61, that is, while the Apostles were in the very height of their evangelical career. Here, then, brethren, is decisive testimony as to the precise time of the first establishment of Christianity in this country, somewhat before the year of our Lord 61. But this will appear more evident when we consider,

(3)—By whom it was first planted. Mark this, that the early fathers, without any one contrary testimony, inform us in general that it was by the Apostles of our Lord personally. Thus, (to give a few instances,) Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus, a most eminent writer and accurate Church historian of the fifth century, has these words:—"The Apostles persuaded even the Britons to receive the laws of the crucified Lord." Tom. 4, Sermon 9. And, to bring this home to Paul as one, at least, of those apostles, he says, in another place, "St. Paul, after his release from imprisonment at Rome, went straightway to Spain, and thence hastening away to other nations, carried the light of the Gospel to them also," in 2 Ep. ad Tim.; and that we may lie under no mistake as to what other nations he means, he adds in a third place, "that he (Paul) after having gone into Spain, brought *salvation to the islands that lie in the ocean*."—Tom. 1, Ps. 116. A plain description of Great Britain and Ireland. He knew of no other islands lying in the ocean; besides, it was the classical as well as the *natural*, (or geographical,) description of these islands. So again,

Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea, who wrote in the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth century, the friend and favourite of Constantine, who, remember, was born in Britain, and was proclaimed Emperor in Britain; Eusebius, who had thus every facility of accurate information, and wrote expressly on such matters, mentions *particularly the British Church as founded by the Apostles* in person. Arguing for the Divine origin of Christianity from the natural ignorance, humbleness, and weakness of the instruments employed in the propagation of it, (the Gallilean fishermen,) he thus *incidentally* alludes to the foundation of the Church in Britain:—"What madness were it in such poor illiterate men, understanding only their mother tongue, to go about to deceive the world by preaching the Gospel to the Romans, the Persians, &c. &c. and those called the British Isles."*

You see then, brethren, that with these accurate church historians of the first ages the Apostolic origin of the Church in England was an universally admitted truth,—an undoubted, unquestioned, fact.

Jerome, nearly of the same age with Eusebius, deservedly styled the most learned of the Latin fathers, the translator of the Bible into that Latin version which is called the vulgate, (the only authentic one with the Church of Rome,) speaks to the same effect,—“Paul preached the Gospel in the western parts;” also he says “he preached from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and went even unto the Spains, (the common name of all the western regions) and took his course from ocean to ocean; imitating the Lord, the sun of righteousness, of whom it is said, ‘his goings forth are from the end of Heaven, and his circuit unto the end thereof,’ so that the earth rather failed before him (Paul) than

his zeal to preach the Gospel.”—Again, Venentius, Bishop of Poitiers, in the sixth century, states, in express words, “that he crossed the ocean, and landed and preached in the countries which the Briton inhabits, and in the utmost Thule.” And to mention but one authority more, and set the matter quite at rest, Clement, Bishop of Rome, who was Paul’s own friend, companion, and fellow-labourer, “whose name” (says he, Phil. iv. 3.) was written in the Book of Life;” this same Clement, whose testimony ought to decide the matter, says “through zeal Paul received the meed of his perseverance, having been seven times imprisoned, having been scourged and stoned, and having been a herald of the Gospel both in the east and in the west, he received the noble crown of faith after he had taught righteousness to the whole world, and gone *even to the utmost bound of the west.*” (Ep. to the Cor. ix. 4.) Where you perceive England is again described, as by its natural situation—*so also in the ordinary language of the day.* The ancients knew nothing west of these islands, and hence from the time of their first discovery of them it was the fashion to designate them by the epithet “utmost,” thus Virgil and Pliny “the *utmost* Thule.” Catullus, “the *utmost* island of the Ocean”—the utmost Britains. Horace, “Britain, the *utmost* people of the world;” and Venentius, as quoted above.*

To these few *specimens* we might add many others, all and each contributing their weight of testimony to the fact, that the British Church not only connects herself with apostolic times, but was actually founded by an Apostle or Apostles in person; a fact which was then, as you see from the nature of the extracts laid before you, universally admitted, which no one thought of contradicting, and which passed as the current historical coin of the Church in that age.—So much for our first position.

Now, Secondly, that St. Paul was this apostolic founder, you see from the same respectable and competent witnesses, some saying, in general terms (which include the particular) that he proclaimed the Gospel to the utmost bounds of the west, which was then the natural as well as the classical description of Britain, others, naming Britain *expressly*, and none, holding, or thinking of holding, any other opinion on the subject, for far more than one thousand years; till long after the Conquest, and the prevalence of Popery in the island.

These are facts which cannot be controverted. The witnesses, who testify to their truth, commence with Paul’s bosom friend—they could be as little deceived in this plain matter of fact; they spoke of it with as much confidence; they had as little suspicion of being mistaken, and they had as many sources of authentic information then in their hands, which have since been lost, as the historians of our own country have that Edward VI. died in his youth—that Queen Elizabeth protected the Protestant religion, or that Philip and Mary sought to destroy it and bring this kingdom back again under the Papal yoke.

Paul then, brethren, if there be any truth in historic testimony, was the founder of the Church of Britain. I, for my part, have no hesitation in being of the mind of those who lived in the best and earliest ages of Christianity.

To a truth thus demonstrated from history, little confirmation from

the Bible will suffice. That little we have. If you look into the 15th chap. of the epistle to the Romans, you will see that St. Paul expresses his *earnest desire, and long cherished purpose*, of going from Rome *into the west*. "*Whensoever*" (says he) "*I take my journey into Spain I will come to you—I will come by you into Spain.*" Words which import *a desire—design—hope—which he had long indulged*.

We must add to this quotation a few very remarkable and interesting facts:—First, Paul's release from prison at Rome agrees exactly with the time mentioned by Gildas, of the first planting of Christianity here. It was in the year 58. Secondly, what is a still more remarkable and interesting fact, he was a prisoner at the same time with the illustrious family of the British King Caractacus, and was released in the same year with them.—Thirdly, from this release to the apostle's second imprisonment and martyrdom at Rome, there was an interval of eight years, at least; from A.D. 58 to 66. This interval, say the fathers, (without any contrary opinion,) "he passed in going up and down, *through*, and preaching in the western parts;"—"yea," (says the Jesuit Capelli, *Lives of the Apostles*, page 29,) "it was the common and received opinion of all the fathers, nor is it disallowed by scarcely any that I know of at this day, that Paul, after those two years of imprisonment at Rome, mentioned by Luke, (Acts xxviii. 30.) spent some years preaching the Gospel in the west." Add to all these facts one more, that during his stay at Rome he converted, it is highly probable, two British ladies of the highest eminence, Pomponia, the wife of the late governor of Britain, and Claudia, the wife of the senator Pudens, who is mentioned with her husband, 2 Tim. iv. 21. "Eubulus saluteth thee, and Pudens, and Linus, and *Claudia*, and all the brethren."*

Now then, brethren, putting all these facts together—considering his long cherished wish and purpose,—the *leisure* time afforded him—his burning *zeal* and labour to preach the Gospel more abundantly than they all—the *opportunity* he had of going into Britain with the released captives—with other encouraging and inviting circumstances—the great consequence and celebrity of the Island at the time—its commerce, colonies, and settlements—considering all these things, there would be ample ground to conclude, even though ancient writers were silent on the matter, that Paul did indeed do what all antiquity asserted and believed of him:—preach the Gospel, not only in Spain, but also in *these uttermost bounds of the west—even Britain*; and that too, at the time our earliest national historian specifies—a little before the year of our Lord, 61.

Here, then, is cause for thankfulness to God in the heart of every sincere British Christian. Hence you see, that all the credit possible is due to those ancient records called "the British Triads," which state that Caractacus's family brought Christianity with them from Rome to this island, on their return from captivity. "Brian, the blessed son of Llyr, first brought the faith of Christ to the Cambrians from Rome, where he had been seven years as a hostage for his son *Caradog*"—that is, from the year of our Lord 51 to 58.—(Triads of the Isle of Britain, page 382.)

* For proof and elucidation of these facts see Bishop Stillingfleet and Archbishop Usher, *Antiq. Brit.* And Bishop Burgess's *tracts*, where they are very

Thirdly—Let me now lay before you some of the evidence we have that this was not a mere flash of light—not a mere transient ray of Heaven that visited our isle—but, *meeting* with or *kindling* no warmth in the hearts of the barbarous natives, was suffered soon to decay and die; but the commencement, nucleus, first spring, and source, of that Christian Church which, though suffering various vicissitudes of fortune, like other national Churches, yet has continued to the present day.

That she continued a flourishing Church (flourishing for the age), we have the undoubted testimony of the Christian fathers in each successive century, down from the age of the Apostles; the *incidental, undesigned, disinterested, unbiassed* testimony, which must have the preference to all *interested party-testimony since invented*, and read only in *monkish legends and chronicles*.

Thus, to give one or two instances in each century. Tertullian, who flourished about eighty years after the death of the Apostle John—writing against the Jews, and proving to them that Jesus is the Christ, by an argument (very common in those early ages) drawn from the wide extent which his religion had already attained among the nations—instances, among others the remote nations of Britain, and instances them too in such a way as to show that the Church was now so extensively spread in the island as to be received in those *wild inaccessible parts where the Roman arms had not yet penetrated*. The whole passage is very interesting, grand, and beautiful,—as showing not only the astounding progress Christianity had made at the end of the second century over the world, but also the opinion, which the whole Christian Church then entertained of our Lord's person and offices: "You believe" (says he to the Jews) "yourselves, that the Christ is to be a king and a conqueror; lo! then, what king—what conqueror—what nation—has ever acquired so mighty a dominion as this Christ has, who is already come?—Did Solomon? Did the Babylonians? Did Nebuchadnezzar? Alexander? the Romans, &c. &c.?" and then enumerating the nations in which the religion and rule of Christ were received at that time, he thus refers to Britain among the rest—"In whom else but that Christ who is already come, have all these nations believed! all the borders of Spain, the divers nations of Gaul—and those places of Britain which the Roman arms have not yet been able to penetrate, BUT WHICH ARE SUBJECT TO CHRIST."*

Christianity, we know, settled herself first generally in the leading cities and towns of the empire, and thence extended herself gradually over the country around; so that it is an obvious inference from Tertullian's words, that by the time she had subdued the wildest parts of Britain to the yoke of Christ, she must have been well *established* over all its more civilized and accessible regions.

* Tract. Adversus Judæos. c. 7.—A little more of this passage, (which I give,) is eminently worthy of the attention of some in Birmingham.—He observes that all other empires have their bounds, are confined within their fixed limits, "but that the kingdom and name of Christ stretch out every where; he is every where believed in; he is *worshipped* by all the nations enumerated above; he reigns every where; is every where *adored*; with him there is no respect of persons—he is equal to all—king to all—judge to all,"—and what more, think you, Trinitarians?—mark!—"God and Lord to all." Such was the faith, if we are to believe this credible witness, of all Christians, every where, in the second century. Who will calculate the amount of the prejudice that can not this evidence of defence?

Now add to this the fact which, stripped of the legends added to it by the monks, comes to this simply, as stated in the Welsh Triads, that in this century "Lleirwig," (in Latin, Lucius,) "called Lleuwer, the great, king of Britain," (under the Romans) "publicly professed the Christian religion, and gave the privilege of country and tribe, with civil and ecclesiastical rights, to all who were Christians." (b)

So again—Origin, who lived in the *third* century, a little after the death of Tertullian, to show how prophecy was being fulfilled in the spreading out of Christianity, among other instances, alleges Britain, and, like Tertullian before him, in such a way as shows how greatly the Church was flourishing here at his time—A.D. 240. "When (says he) did Britain, before the coming of Christ, *consent together* in the worship of one God?" The words "*consent together*," showing clearly the great and extensive, if not the general, spread and reception of the faith all over the island. So again, "*Christ's power* is seen in *Britain* as well as in *Mauritania*."

In the fourth century testimonies so multiply that there is some difficulty in making a selection. To omit innumerable other particulars, we may observe in general, that in the year 303 commenced that fiery trial, the last of the ten persecutions,—that called the *Dioclesian*—which was the first that lighted the fagot on the British shores, and stained her soil with the blood of the martyrs. Gildas, and Bede after him, are copious in their accounts of the havoc it made here—"Then it was (say they), that Britain enjoyed the highest glory by her devoted confession of God,"—Vast was the number of her martyrs. The names of several are preserved and celebrated by the two writers just mentioned, especially that of *St. Alban*, who suffered on the hill over against the present St. Alban's, which is named after him. This persecution closed with Constantine's accession to the empire. He was a native of Britain, his mother, Helena, was a British lady, his father died in Britain, and he was himself proclaimed emperor in Britain; and as he was the first emperor who declared himself a Christian, so we may be sure, the Church of Britain enjoyed not the least portion of his favour—"Now" (say Gildas and Bede*) "the persecuted Christians return from the woods and mountains and dens of the earth, re-establish Christianity, restore the churches, build basiliks of the saints and martyrs, especially one where St. Alban lies buried; and setting up again in triumph their victorious standards, celebrate their divine rites with clean hands and hearts,—and this peace continued in the British churches till the times of the *Arian madness*, which infected this remote island as well as the rest of the world."

One particular more in this century I must notice, and I claim your special attention to it. The empire having become Christian, as General Councils from this period became common, so we find the British Bishops regularly attending their sessions, and subscribing their decrees and canons. Three names, Eborus of York, Restitutus of London, and Adelphius of Caerleon-upon-Usk, with the names of a priest and a deacon, are found appended to the Council of Arles, celebrated in the year 314.† So also they were present at Sardica in 347, at Arimi-

* Bede, lib. 1., c. 7—8.

† Euseb. Ecclesiastical History b. 10.. c. 5. So also. Collection of the Coun-

num in 359, and it is highly probable there were some also at the great Council of Nice. These facts alone, had we no other, are, in themselves, all the proofs that can be desired to establish *the validity of the orders of the Church here, the episcopal form of her government, and her entire constitution as a Church of Christ*,—seeing, that her titles and claims to these characters went unquestioned,—were admitted—by the Church universal assembled in general council—in an age, too, when the Church had little else to do than to enquire into ordinations, consecrations, successions, and such like matters, and when she did enquire into them with the utmost severity.

Let us never lose sight then of these interesting and valuable facts—three Bishops,* from the principal cities then in England, representing their brethren and the Church of the island at large, having seats in and subscribing the canons of, the Councils held in Europe and Asia during the fourth century, at one of which, that of Nice, be it remembered, the independence of all national churches was settled, and all foreign jurisdiction excluded by canon. (c)

And as to the purity of the faith of our Church at this time, it was not merely admitted but admired. Thus Jerome—"Equally from Britain as from Jerusalem, the gates of heaven lie open." Here you see her orthodoxy is put on a par with that of Jerusalem, "*the mother of us all*." And in another place he says "That the Churches of Gaul and Britain, with those of Asia and the East, *adore one Christ*, observe *one rule of truth*."—Vol. 1., p. 103. St. John Chrysostom, Bishop and Patriarch of Constantinople, in several places refers to the British Churches, and refers to them, too, in such a way as to shew, that the faith received by them from the Apostles continued not only pure and sound, but even flourishing, to his own time, that is, to the fifth century. "The Britanic Isles which lie beyond this sea, those I mean *lying in the very ocean*, have felt the power of the word."—Tome 6, p. 635. Again, "whether you go to the ocean, even to the *British Isles*, or sail to the Euxine Sea, or go to the North, you will hear them everywhere teaching wisdom out of the Scriptures, each, indeed differing in *voice*, but not in *faith*,—in *language*, but not in *sentiment*."—Tome 8, p. 3. So again, "To whatever quarter you turn,—to the Indians, or Moors, or *Britains*, even the remotest bounds of the *West*, you will find this doctrine—'*In the beginning was the word*,' and with it *all the means of holiness of life*."

Throughout the remainder of the fifth century and part of the sixth, we have still many evidences of her flourishing condition, all circumstances considered. Thus theological disputes settled; two successive Councils held to establish against Pelagius the doctrines of grace; schools (or colleges) instituted in several dioceses, particularly in the west, which produced many great men and saints; a third Council consisting of 118 Bishops† besides Abbots and other ecclesiastics, celebrated at the church of St. David in Wales, in the sixth century, at which St. Da-

* They were the metropolitans.

† See Stillingfleet for remarks on this Council, particularly as to the number of Bishops, which he shows is not at all improbable, as they were then far more numerous than they have been since;—besides they might have been joined by others from the neighbouring churches.

vid,* who was the great ornament of the sixth century, and the glory of the British Church, presided,—these, with many such other facts, afford incontrovertible proofs that the British Church was still a regular episcopal church in the fifth and sixth centuries. It is true that during the sixth, especially the latter part of it, she suffered great calamities and vicissitudes from the violence of the Jute, the Anglian, and Saxon settlers. Yet the facts now mentioned, and some others which we shall notice anon, are sufficient proofs that she lived through them all—*lived* even in the kingdoms of the Heptarchy, and flourished in the rest of Britain.

We come now, to our fourth position, namely, the first appearance of a Romish missionary in the island, and the British Church's consequent rejection of his overtures and pretensions. A few preliminary remarks will be important. Observe, first, that on the history of our Church, from this time onward, the venerable Bede, our most eminent national historian, (he died in the year 735, admitted on all hands to have been by far the greatest scholar in Christendom during the eighth century,) is very copious; and from him the account I am about further to submit to you is extracted in almost his express words. We must keep in mind, however, that being a Saxon by birth, of the papal party, and indeed a devoted admirer of the Roman See, "*he saith as little*" says Leland, "*as he well could that tendeth to the honor of the British Church.*"

2nd.—Though during the latter part of the sixth century especially Christianity suffered greatly from the Saxon invaders, and gradually receded westward, and though with the Saxon dominion, Saxon idolatry prevailed over the seven kingdoms established by them, yet not, mark! so as to leave the Heptarchy in total darkness,—for, 1st, it was still the religion of the old natives, now reduced to slavery, throughout the Heptarchy.† 2nd.—Some tolerated it among their British subjects on condition of their paying an annual tribute ‡

Nay, 3rd. Theonus, Archbishop of London, in the very centre of Saxon dominion, and Thadioc, Archbishop of York, did not quit their sees, and retire westward from the fury of the persecutors, till 586, only ten years before the intrusion of Austin. § And it was then with only *many*, not with *all*, of their clergy. We know from all the annals of religious persecution, that the heads of the Church are always the first objects of its cruelty. The lofty pines are shaken by the storm, while the lowly shrub escapes it fury.—Hence, a certain inference, that no few Christians must yet have remained in those provinces, where the Archbishops had so long continued,—whence they had only so lately been forced to retire.—This I think is clear.

One remarkable fact more—Bede admits, (Book 1.c. 25.) that even at the moment of Austin's landing, Christianity was no stranger to the court of Kent. Bertha, the Royal spouse of Ethelbert King of Kent, was a Christian, and had her Bishop with her, in the Palace of Canterbury, as her principal chaplain, and had her church, that of St. Martin, in the neighbourhood "to which," says he, "*she was wont to resort, to offer*

* He died, anno 544.

† This is admitted by Lingard, the Romish historian, vol. 1, page 81,

‡ Stillingfleet, from Rudburn. p. 344.

her devotions;" so that there existed "in the principal seat of Anglo-Saxon power, a Christian congregation, having at its head an orthodox Bishop, and for its leading member the most illustrious female in England,"* for Ethelbert was at this time Bretwald, or monarch.

When, therefore, it is said by monkish writers, in a vague, general, declamatory style, "that the Saxons left not the face of Christianity wherever they prevailed,"† we must not understand these words literally,—we must make great deductions for the declamatory style; we must not lose sight of facts in the mists of declamation; we must remember still, that while Christianity *flourished* throughout all the west of the Island, she certainly lived throughout the rest of England—yea, one monastery (or college) the most famous one of Bangor, contained 2,100 members. We know from the history of persecutions, what Christians will do to maintain their faith and worship.

Thus, then, it was that matters stood in Britian, when in the year 596, the Roman Austin, with forty companions, was sent hither by Gregory the Great, under a pretence of converting the idolatrous Saxon settlers, but with a real view of subjecting the Church to his yoke. (d) When they appeared in the kingdom of Kent, they had the high satisfaction, if to them a satisfaction, of beholding the lamp of Christianity burning even there,—burning, though *sadly*, it may be true, yet not dimly; yea, doubtless, the more brightly and purely *because*, sadly,—Christianity, to use the words of the poet, "smiled through her tears."

The last mentioned circumstance, (that of the court being already almost half Christian,) sufficiently accounts for the kind reception the Roman monks met with in Kent. Hence we see no difficulty in the fact that Ethelbert, who received them in open air, fearful of magic, bestowed upon them forthwith a mansion in Canterbury, and, though he did not declare himself at once a convert, yet gave them a license to preach and evangelize his kingdom. His conversion soon followed. Thus then we have now two rival churches, in the island, the old Apostolic British Church, (two of whose Archbishops, Theonus and Thadioc, were, *probably*, yet alive, while another, *we know*, was in his chair at Landaff or Caerleon-upon-Usk,) and the newly established Saxon or Romish Church, whose primacy was at Canterbury; its Archbishop *designing—meditating*—a spiritual sovereignty—indeed, sent in by the Pope with the view of subjecting all the other Bishops of the Island to his See. Let me prove this:—Austin had no sooner gained a footing, than he wrote to the Pope for instructions; and one of the questions proposed to him, with the answer of Gregory, puts the matter in a clear light, and shows, in their own words, the arrogant, uncharitable, unjust, ambitious, not to say, unchristian, views of both.—Question: "How am I to deal with the Bishops of Britain"?—Answer:—"All the Bishops of Britain, I commit to you, brother, that the *unlearned* may be *taught*, the *weak strengthened* by your word, and the *disobedient corrected* by your authority."‡ This was the first time the language of ecclesiastical *usurpation* was heard in this island. Armed, then, with these powers over the whole Church in England, Austin demands a conference with the British Bishops of the next province, and by the interest of

* Soames' History of the Anglo-Saxon Church.

† Reinhold and Matthew of Westminster.

Ethelbert obtains it. They meet him near Worcester. He proposes that, ratifying a Catholic peace* as he calls it, they would unite *with him*, in the common labour of preaching the Gospel to the Gentile Saxons. After a lengthened dispute, "the British Bishops refuse their assent, *reject his prayers, his exhortations, his threats.*"—In a second conference, at "which were present seven British Bishops, with many learned Doctors, principally from the most noble monastery of Bangor, over which Dinloth then presided," Austin, humbled and baffled by the spirit of the British Bishops, grows more moderate in his demands. He reduces them to *three*, and, mark his words! "Though" (says he), *ye do many things contrary to our customs*, yet if ye will *obey me* in the three following particulars—the time of observing Easter; the manner of baptizing children; and the preaching of the Gospel to the heathen; *all other things that ye do, however contrary to our customs*, we will strive to tolerate in you." The native prelates answer, "We will do none of these things, neither will we have you for our Archbishop." "If, then," retorts the baffled, angry Austin, in a menacing tone, "*you will not accept of peace with brethren, you shall have war with your enemies; and if you will not preach the way of life to the Anglo-Saxons, you shall suffer the vengeance of death at their hands.*"† "Which threat," adds the historian, "was soon fulfilled in every tittle, as the man of God had predicted."—How? In the cold-blooded slaughter of 1,200 unarmed monks and ecclesiastics at Bangor, while at their solemn devotions praying for the success of their country's arms, by order of one of the Anglo-Saxon Kings! ‡

Thus, then, you have from Bede himself, an Anglo-Saxon, of the Romish party, (for I have given you nothing in this sketch but his express words,) and in the seventh century, the ancient Apostolic Church of England's *indignant and firm* but *dear-bought* rejection of the overtures of the Church of Rome,—the maintenance of her ancient freedom and independence, costing her, as it appears, the lifeblood of 1,200 of her most pious sons!

Now, my brethren, we are ready for our fifth position, and while we complete our argument, it will be interesting to you to see on what grounds it was that the primitive prelates, abbots, and doctors of the British Church, rejected the proposed union with the Romish missionaries. At first sight it may appear strange to some of you that the old native ecclesiastics rejected such apparently reasonable proposals; but a moment's reflection will convince you, that all that was not only unreasonable, but unkind also, and unrighteous too, was on the side of the foreign intruders and usurpers. Firstly—The uniting of the British Church in the proposed Catholic peace involved their subjection to Austin and the Pope; it was to be at the expense of having him for their Archbishop, to the exclusion of their own primate; the terms, remember, were, "if ye obey me in these three things." Secondly—It involved the establishment of Austin and his followers in the rights and privileges of others—in many sees and churches, the expelled owners of which were yet alive. Thirdly—It was contrary to the

* An insidious term, the cant phrase of Rome, which implied their entire submission to his religion and authority.

† Bede. Book 2, c. 2.

canons of the Catholic Church, which forbid all foreign interference. Fourthly—It was contrary to justice, piety, and pity, to admit him to be their primate, to the prejudice—the degradation—of their own; and that, at the bidding of a proud and insolent stranger. Fifthly—Besides all this, the new pastors countenanced the Saxons and Angles, in those perfidious usurpations and oppressions, which the old prelates and ecclesiastics had witnessed with just horror; and, if true, to their charge, had preached against with Christian firmness—a thing which we collect they did, and which, in fact, brought down upon them and their church, the fury of the perjured idolaters. This, then, was the cause why they said, and had good cause to say,—“We will not do these things, neither will we have you to be Archbishop over us.”

Thus it was, to use the words of Geraldus, “that *both him and his institutes they despised*, and having returned home they publicly proclaimed that they would have none of him for Archbishop.” They would not submit their necks to the Roman yoke—not that they were disinclined to preach the Word of Life to those very heathens who had so wronged and oppressed them. The following extract, containing the answer of Dinot, who presided at the time over the great school at Banchor, and was one of the principal spokesmen on the British side, (which answer Bede has not recorded,) shows in a clear light that it was *not* disinclination:—“Know assuredly, and have no doubts upon the matter, (said this venerable and primitive ecclesiastic,) that we all, and each one of us, are obedient and subject to the Church of God; and to the Pope of Rome, and to every godly Christian, to love every one in his degree in perfect charity, and to help every one, in word and deed, to be the children of God—and other obedience than this I know not to be due to him whom you call Pope and Father of Fathers; and this obedience we are ready to give and to pay to *him* and to every Christian continually. *Besides, we are under the government of the Bishop of Karleow-upon-Uske, who, under God, is to oversee over us, and cause us to keep the way spiritual.*”*

Thus you have the first ground of rejection; the authority claimed by Austin in the name of the Bishop of Rome. But I must prove to you, 2nd, that it was the *religious usages and ceremonies* of the Church of Rome at the time that were the principal objects of abhorrence to these old-fashioned, primitive, simple, apostolic Christians. I do not say that the Church of Rome had yet *materially* erred in the *articles of faith*. If we except, firstly, the pretensions of the Bishop of Rome, which were yet comparatively moderate; secondly, some monkish dreams and fantasies, which Gregory sanctioned, respecting some vague purgatory or other; and thirdly, prayers for the dead;—if we except these three things, Rome was yet, in *matters of doctrine, comparatively* unsullied. But mark this, however! she had already laid deep the foundations of many, in her use of images, incense, holy water, reliques, service in an unknown tongue, (*e*) and in the load of strange, mysterious, heathenish ceremonies and usages, with which she had encumbered every ordinance of religion, and buried almost quite out of sight the first simplicity of Christian worship. Of these Gregory himself was one of the most enthusiastic promoters.

* Leland 71—Spelman, in his Councils, page 108.

A single extract from Bede will lay open to you one fatal source of Rome's corruptions, more than anything I can say upon the subject. It is a letter of Gregory's, directing Austin what he was to do with the heathen temples, festivals, ceremonies, &c. He was simply to *Christianise* them, that by this kind indulgence he might the more easily proselytise, for I cannot say convert, the people.—“Let not the temples of the idols be destroyed, but only let the idols be removed, let holy water be sprinkled in them, altars built, reliques deposited, and thus let them be turned to the service of the true God, that the people, seeing their old temples, may put away error from their hearts, and flock with more familiarity to their accustomed places. And, as they are wont to sacrifice to their demons numerous oxen, let some saint's festival be substituted for their idol's day; thus, on the day of the Church's dedication,” (the wake-day, as it is now called,) “or the holiday of the saint, let them make booths round the temple-churches—slay animals, not to the devil, but for their own eating—celebrate the holiday with religious feasting, and give glory to God for their fullness; that by our thus allowing them external bodily joys, they may be the more readily brought to assent to that which is internal; for it is indubitably an impossible thing to expel all error from the mind at once.—Given at Rome, &c.”

Here is the well-intended, it may be, but weak, fatal, policy, which gradually heathenised and corrupted the simplicity of Christian doctrine and worship. So early was the Church of Rome content to leave the idolater his old heart, profane ceremonies, notions, and practices, if only he consented to change his own and their *name* to that of Christian.

Thus, then, when they appeared upon our shores, exhibiting the religion of Christ in these new-fashioned, gorgeous colours; advancing, as Bede describes them, with processions, crucifixes, images of our Lord, and singing litanies in an unusual mode and unknown tongue, so much so as to strike the heathen monarch with the terror of magic, with the very many other customs in which they and we were contrary to each other, no wonder at all that this *odd, novel, exotic, and apparently heathenish*, Christianity made at first sight a startling impression upon, and revolted the native piety of the yet simple and unsophisticated followers of St. Paul, and descendants of the good old Kings Bryan, and Lleirwig. The British and Irish Christians had yet been, comparatively unspoiled in doctrine, discipline, and worship, by that silly, over-forward, officious wisdom of man, which has, ever since the world began, loved to tamper with, and, by attempting to model, marred the simple religion of God. It is almost a paradox to say that anything Christian is natural; but yet, as Christian and other habits may, and do, under the influence of God's spirit, become *second nature*, so our English and Irish ancestors, shocked at these novelties, shrunk with a *natural Christian* abhorrence from the entire religion of the new comers. The form which it had by this time assumed, apparently approached that of the idolatrous Saxons. As it was, therefore, more likely to recommend itself to, and gain upon, their heathenish habits and prejudices, so it was, for the same cause, more likely to make the old native Christians justly more jealous of its poisonous tendency, and naturally have a greater horror of it than of paganism itself. Therefore they said, “we will do none of the things you specify; we will not conform to your

worship in those things in which our practices are contrary, much less will we have you as Archbishop."

That the remarks I have now offered are not mere conjectures, or matters of opinion only, but the irresistible impressions of historical facts, the following extracts will prove:—

Let me premise, that I do not wish any stress to be laid upon the two quotations I am about to give, unless borne out by the testimony of Bede. From an old Welsh Chronicle, preserved in Bennett's College, Cambridge, the following is an extract:—"After the Saxons prevailed continual war remained between the Brittainians (the then inhabitants of the realm) and the Saxons, the Brittainians being *Christians* and the Saxons *Pagans*. However, as occasion served, they sometimes treated of peace, and then they mette together and communed together; but after that by the means of Austin, the Saxons became Christians, in such sort as Austin had taught them; the Brittainians would not, after that, *neither eat nor drink with them, nor yet salute them, because they corrupted with superstition, images, and idolatrie, the TRUE RELIGION OF CHRIST.*" The words "superstition, images, and idolatry," express not, I take it, what the Church of Rome had yet literally become; for we know from Gregory's own letters that they had not yet adopted the *worship* of images,—but what, from her unchristian usages, she *seemed* to have become,—what, in brief, from her strange corrupt appearance, British Christians *took* her to be.

To this we add another extract, which Archbishop Usher has translated from the remains of Taliessin, who lived about the time, was the most famous of the ancient British bards, and was styled by his countrymen Ben Beirddh,—“the Chief of the Bards.” It well describes what opinion, even the *populace*, among whom these bards travelled and sung, entertained of the new intruding pastors.

Woe be to that priest y-borne
That will not cleanly weed his corn,
And preach his charge among.
Woe be to that shepherd, I say,
That will not watch his fold *always*,
As to his office doth belong.
Woe be to him that will not keep,
From *Romish wolves* his sheep,
With staff and weapon strong.

To these we might add other like testimonies, as the Archbishop does; but we need not have recourse to the remains of the ancient British bards, nor manuscript Chronicles, to show the grounds on which our Church rejected communion with the Church of Rome, in the seventh century. Bede, himself, furnishes us with more than details enough on the subject. I shall submit two extracts from him, which fully bear out the testimony of the bards and chroniclers, and which are quite decisive as to the point in hand. In his 2nd Book, 20th chapter, he tells us, Cadwalla, the old British King, rebelled successfully in Northumberland; and describing his severities upon the Saxon settlers, he adds, “And even for that Christian religion which had sprung up among the Saxons, he had no respect—he showed no deference to it; *for even to this day*” (more than one hundred years after the events occurred which he is recording) “*it is the custom of the Britons to set at nought*

the faith and religion of the Angles, and no more to hold communion with them in anything than with the Pagans themselves."

Thus, then, this authentic history of one of the adverse party, who describes what passed before his own eyes, sufficiently bears out the accounts of the bards and chroniclers.

But this is not all,—we can bring the express words of the intruding ecclesiastics themselves. Bede has preserved in his 2nd Book, chapt. 4, an epis. addressed by Laurence, Austin's successor, by Mellitus of London, and Justus of Rochester, to the Irish Bishops and Abbots, which shows in the most striking manner, what a horror they, (the Irish,) as well as the British, entertained at the time, of Rome's faith and religion.

"These three Bishops having heard," (says he,) "that the Irish were as opposed to their religion, in many things, (mark!) as the British themselves, wrote to them an exhortatory letter, beseeching and conjuring them to join with them in Catholic peace and unity; of which the following is the beginning:—*'Laurentius, Mellitus, and Justus, Bishops, servants of the servants of God, to our lords and most dear brethren, the Bishops or Abbots of Ireland, greeting. We once thought better of the Irish than of the Britons; but we have since learned from Daganus, one of your Bishops, who came into this island, and from Columbanus, an abbot, who is settled in France, that the Irish differ in nothing from the British in their manner of living; for Bishop Daganus, when he came here, would not so much as eat under the same roof—in the same house with us—much less sit at the same table with us.'* The same Laurentius (adds Bede,) with his brother Bishops, sent a similar epistle to the British clergy, but how little effect he produced by such efforts, the sad state of things, even at this day, (when Bede was writing, A.D. 731,) sufficiently declares."*

This, brethren, if anything, is decisive. We cannot desire, much less expect, to find more satisfactory testimony from more credible witnesses. Here we have not only an Apostolic but a Protestant Church. Here we have the old Apostolic and yet uncorrupted Church of Britain, with her Bishops, Archbishops, and subordinate clergy—and not only the Church of Britain, but that of the sister isle also—still *living*, and not only *living* but *flourishing*—"being clean contrary to the Church of Rome, not merely in the time of celebrating the Easter festival, but also in very many other usages which she followed and they did not;" not only rejecting her pretended authority, and condemning her novelties as superstition and idolatry, but even disclaiming all Christian fellowship with all who belonged to her communion; yea, having as great a contempt for her forms as for those of Pagans—and all this up to the days of Bede,—near the middle of the eighth century—yea, and much farther, had we time to pursue the argument. Thus, did she continue long independent, firm, and free, notwithstanding Italian craft, subtlety, intrigue,

* Equally sound, pure, and independent of any foreign jurisdiction as the Church in England, was the Church in Ireland at this time. Jonas, a Gallic Bishop, who was contemporary with Bede, gives this testimony of them:—"Ireland," says he, "though it received not the laws by which the rest of the nations were governed," (he means the canon law and worship of Rome,) "*yet so flourished in the vigour of Christian doctrine, as to exceed the faith of all the neighbouring nations.*"—

stratagem, secular power, royal favor, court influence, pious fraud, lying miracles, and all those other, either open forces or secretly undermining artifices, which the Church of Rome has never stuck at employing, from the first moment the demon of ambition seized her, and she turned usurper upon the liberties and privileges of her sister Churches.

But I must not allow myself to declaim—I wish to put nothing but naked facts before you, leaving them to be altogether their own commentators.

To complete our subject, I have but one topic more briefly to touch, it is this,—that it was not after all the *Romish party*, but the native and Irish clergy who converted almost all the Heptarchy. Bede's history onward from the passages last quoted, is little else than the details of the conversion of the respective kingdoms. Oswald, prince of Northumbria, (whose kingdom included all northern England, and part of Scotland to Edinburgh,) being an exile from his very infancy, took refuge among the Irish Christians (*f*) from the fury of an usurper. He was consequently educated as a Christian, and when he subsequently recovered his kingdom and established himself with great power on the Northumbrian throne, one of his first steps was to re-establish Christianity throughout his extensive dominions—not by force, however, but by persuasion. For this purpose he sent for missionaries from amongst those people who had been his religious instructors. “Aidan,” says Bede “a Bishop of uncommon meekness, piety, and moderation, and having a zeal for God but not according to knowledge,” (because, forsooth, he was not of the communion of Rome,) “answered the call. He fixed his see at Landesfarn, which Oswald consigned to him. Vast numbers of the Scots (Irish) followed him daily into Britain.” He was succeeded in the episcopal chair by Finan, and he again by Colman, both of the same nation with him, and of the same creed with the old national Church of Britain; and it was by the zealous labours of these three successive prelates and their clergy that the whole kingdom of Northumberland was evangelized. “The people” (says the historian, Bede) “flocked to hear the word gladly. The King himself, and his nobility, who had been brought up with him in the country of the missionaries, acted often as interpreters; churches were built everywhere, and” (mark this! and it applies to all the other kingdoms of the Heptarchy as well as to Northumberland) “*possessions and territories* were bestowed upon them by Royal munificence for the institution of monasteries,”* which in this age were the great schools (or colleges) where the clergy were educated.

Such, briefly, is Bede's account of the re-establishment of the Church in the kingdom of Northumberland; and this, in fact, led to the similar establishment of it throughout almost all the rest of England. Thus, again, as to the next great kingdom, Mercia (including all the midland counties), Peada, its king, marrying a Northumbrian princess, the grand-daughter of Oswald, and daughter of Oswi, becomes a Christian, and receives as Bishop of Mercia, Diuma, a prelate of the same race and creed *with*, and consecrated *by*, Finan; and under Bishop Diuma (the first Bishop of Lichfield), and his three *successors*, members also of the old national church, assisted by the native clergy, all the midland counties, (eighteen in number,) were converted. Again, as to the king-

dom of the East-Saxons,—though the Romish missionaries had been received there awhile, yet it soon relapsed into idolatry and expelled Mellitus. However, Sigebert, its king, becoming a guest at the Northumbrian court, there becomes a Christian, receives St. Chad, consecrated by Finan as Bishop of London, and chiefly by the labours of this eminent prelate and his three successors, all the modern diocese of London was reclaimed from heathenism. Fursey, an Irish monk, devoted himself to the evangelising of East Anglia; so that every county from Edinburgh to the southern extremity of the diocese of London, except Suffolk and Norfolk, in which Felix, a Burgundian Bishop in communion with the Church of Rome laboured, has the full gratification of being indebted, not to Rome, but to native and Irish missionaries for the restoration of the Christian religion, *and the re-establishment of a Christian Church*. And as regards the southern counties, they are all, with the exception of Kent, (where, yet be it remembered, Austin found, upon his arrival, a Christian congregation,) though not entirely, yet very largely indebted, under God, to native piety and zeal for the greatest benefit that man can confer on man. The great kingdoms already converted had no small share in influencing the conversion of these.* These are the plain, unvarnished facts of Bede's history, stripped of the marvellous and legendary,—of the fable and miracle—which the credulous age between Bede's time and their occurrence naturally *would* and *did* adorn them with.

Thus, I think, you all see how conclusive the evidence is, that some of the Apostles first preached the Gospel in England; that Paul was one, at least, of those Apostles; that Christianity was established here between the years 58 and 61, as Gildas states, when Paul and the family of Caradog were released from prison at Rome; that it flourished thence onward to the establishment of the northern usurpers; that though Saxon idolatry with Saxon sovereignty for a while overran the Heptarchy, yet the national faith lived in England and flourished throughout all the west of Britain; that at the coming in of the Pope's first emissaries (for, from the facts of the case I cannot help calling them so,) she showed herself *virtually* a Protestant Church; and that, after all, the conversion *of*, and re-establishment of the Church *in*, the kingdoms of the Heptarchy, was mainly owing to her zeal; by no means to that of Rome,—*she* was yet comparatively confined to Kent. How the agents of the Church of Rome afterwards came in and established themselves upon the labours of others, would take us now too long to detail. Suffice it to say, it was by those very arts of intrigue and Jesuitism, for which she has ever been so distinguished. But though she at length succeeded for a time, you know how in the days of the Reformation your fathers, at the expense of their blood, recovered and re-established their ancient Christian liberties, Christian creed, Christian government, and Christian worship.

I need not say to you, how the deep, designing, subtle politician at Rome, did gradually insinuate himself,—how serpent-like he did wind and coil himself round the hearts of our great ones, till at length, under the line of the Norman Conqueror, he got his spiritual chain fast bound round the neck of the British people. This he continued with

unsparing and merciless hand, to draw still tighter and tighter, till the iron links, unable any longer to bear the pressure, broke into a thousand fragments in the tyrant's grasp, and the enslaved Church found herself again free! Then, with eager hands, your fathers snatched up the sacred volume, the sword of the spirit, the charter of their liberties, their privileges, their hopes! they fought with it,—they endured the fagot with it,—they waded through fire and blood with it,—they held and clung to it! till generation after generation dying in the Lord, left the precious deposit with you, their children, saying, Lo! I have fought the good fight! I have finished my course! I have kept the faith! I am now ready to be offered up! But thou be valiant for the Lord of Hosts! Be faithful unto the death! Hold fast that thou hast! Oh! let no man have your crown!

Thus, my friends, it is that this charter is come down to you. It is yours' still; but how long it shall be so God in his wisdom only knows!—God in his mercy only can order! Of this we are sure, that that man is not worthy of such forefathers—deserves not the name of Briton, much less of British Christian, who will not do all in his power to preserve his spiritual privileges, and hand them down unimpaired to his children. And, certainly, one definite way of doing this is, to be ever on the watch against, counteract, and, under God's blessing, defeat, the efforts that are now being made, through the same secret, slow, undermining artifices of intrigue and Jesuitism, as have ever marked the progress of the enemy here, to bring him again under the yoke of spiritual bondage.

Let every member within our Church's pale, in the first place, seek in prayer from God to have a just sense of his immense privileges in being a member of, certainly, take her all in all, the most apostolic, scriptural, and spiritual Church that now is, or long has been, in Christendom. And having obtained this blessing of God, he will then, I have no doubt, be ready, each one in his station, to add his mite, however little, to every effort that is made to strengthen the Church's hands, to build up her hedges, secure her bulwarks, make known her worth, extend her influence, help all to drink into her spirit, show up the misapprehensions of some, and the malice of others, her enemies, and preserve her a blessing on the earth to generations yet to come! May God, of his infinite mercy, inspire both you and all, in the best sense of the phrase, ever to do your duty.

APPENDIX.

(a) The present venerable Bishop of Salisbury, Dr. Burgess, in one of his admirable tracts, distributes this evidence "into a selection of seven epochs of Christianity in Britain, from the first introduction of the Gospel to the beginning of the seventh century, namely, the preaching of the Gospel by Saint Paul in the first century; the public protection of Christianity, by King Lucius, in the second century; the Dioclesian persecution in the third and fourth century; the establishment of Christianity, by Constantine, in the fourth; the suppression of the Pelagian heresy in the fifth; the synod of Llandewi Brefi in the sixth; and the rejection of Popery by the British Bishops in the seventh century."—Tracts by the Bishop of St. David's, p. 125.

(b) For a more detailed account of this King of Britain, as he is called, see Bishop Stillingfleet's work already quoted, p. p. 58, &c.—The Romanists make a great flourish of him, and in imitation of their leader, Bede, tell us our Christianity commenced with him. Bede passes over all notice of the faith here before his time, and unfaithfully begins his history of the British Church with his applying, by letter, as he says, to the then Bishop of Rome for admission into the Christian Church by baptism, "which request," he adds, being complied with, the faith received here continued entire and inviolate to the times of Dioclesian.—Archbishop Usher, and Stillingfleet, not to mention other eminent writers, have shown, by several proofs, that this application is a monkish fable; and if there were no other proof that our worthy Romish historian has played falsely in this respect, this fact would be a sufficient one, namely, that here he deserts Gildas, whom, in other respects, he follows, though he actually retains some of his words. For Gildas tells us expressly, as the fathers do, that the faith continued here from the time of its first reception, in the days of the Apostles, to the time of the Dioclesian persecution. Besides, the very idea of such an application discovers its forgery? *For what need was there for such an application?* "With a Christian Church," says Bishop Burgess, "existing in Britain from the time of St. Paul; and with bishops of her own in succession from her first founder, the grandson of Caractacus, (Lucius) could have no need to apply to any foreign bishop for baptism, nor to seek for it from any one but a successor of Saint Paul."—Ibid, p. 134. See also Stillingfleet, p. p. 55—63.

(c) At the Council of Nice, (A.D. 325.) after the points of faith, and the time of celebrating the Easter festival were settled, the Bishops there assembled made 20 canons for the government and discipline of the Church, election and consecration of Bishops, for holding provincial synods, and settling the bounds of jurisdiction. By the fourth canon, the ecclesiastical polity of every province is left to its own Bishops, under their metropolitan, and all cases of appeal referred to a synod of the whole, which was directed to be held once a year. By the fifth it was provided that no person excommunicated by one Bishop, should be received into communion by another, till his case was tried and determined in the provincial or national synod; whose sentence was decisive and final; there was no higher court of appeal allowed or thought of.—All foreign jurisdiction was, therefore, precluded; and every national Church, and the British Church of course, among the rest, (where Constantine was taught Christianity,) not only had the full power, but was bound to settle all ecclesiastical matters, and end all causes that rose within her provinces; so that it was directly opposed to the canons of the Christian Church, and, therefore, a matter of barefaced usurpation and injustice in Gregory, to interfere with the British Bishops, and consign them, with a stroke of his pen, to the jurisdiction of a stranger. The following quotation will show, not only of what a different spirit were Gregory's predecessors, but also how solemnly binding the canons of Nice were

universally deemed in more pious times :—" *Though the number of Bishops*" (says Pope Leo the Great) "*be never so great, who decree anything against the NICENE canons, they signify nothing, and cannot bind.*" So again, "the privileges of the Churches which were begun by the canons of the holy fathers, and confirmed by the council of NICE, can neither be destroyed by wicked usurpation nor annulled by the humour of change and novelty." How infinitely far was this Pope, who yet was one of the first that began to encroach upon his neighbours, (he was made Pope 440,) from the idea that our Lord Christ had appointed a vicar upon earth, who was to be the supreme judge in all matters ecclesiastical ! We can show the novelty of almost every error of Popery from the writings of the Popes themselves, or rather the more primitive Bishops of Rome.

(d) It is quite easy to see through this entire transaction, the real views of Gregory and Austin. Rome, long before this, had turned usurper upon the rights and liberties of her sister Churches, and had received many a severe rebuff from some of the primitive independent ecclesiastics. That in the case now before us, (that of England,) Gregory had been busily intriguing, both in the court of France and Canterbury, before he sent in Austin, we have something more than probable evidence, from his own words, preserved in several of his letters,—and for my own part, I have no doubt that Austin's introduction at Canterbury through France, with several French missionaries and interpreters, and his kind reception by Ethelbert, were the first fruits of this intrigue. Bertha was a French woman, the daughter of the French King, (pompously styled "*his Christian Majesty, and the eldest son of the Church,*") and her principal chaplain, Luidhard, was of the same nation. Here, then, were materials for the great master-builder at Rome to work upon ; and that he did work upon them his correspondence with the two courts is a decisive proof. He thus writes to the King of France, Bertha's father :—

"It is REPORTED to us that the English nation, through the mercy of God, is very desirous to be converted to the Christian faith, but that your clergy, who are in their neighbourhood, neglect them, and do not care to encourage their desires by reasonable exhortations."*

So, again, in his letter to the Queen of France, Bertha's mother, he writes at the same time as follows :—

"We wish you to know that *we are informed* that the English nation, through the grace of God, would gladly become Christians, but that the clergy, who are their neighbours, have not a pastoral care of them."†

Here are plain proofs, not only that Gregory knew all that was passing at Canterbury, but also that the English nation were already, in a sort of way, instructed in the faith, else it is not easy to see how they could have so vehement a desire to become Christians, that is, admitted into the Church. The truth of the matter appears to be plainly this,—Ethelbert, and the rest of the Saxon Kings, with their subjects, were usurpers. They had been invited into the island to assist the British people to repel the incursions of their northern enemies, the Irish and Picts. They violated their military oaths, broke through their solemn engagements, enslaved the old natives, and, because the British clergy, faithful to their sacred trust, declaimed of course against this impious conduct,—impious even on heathen principles,—they persecuted them and drove them out ; and when afterwards their own nation, from mixing with the British, received from them the knowledge of the Gospel and resolved to be Christians, the King, rather than restore the British clergy to their just rights, brought in the Romish priests to countenance his usurpations, or, at least, with the hopes that they would not be over severe in their censures on his conduct and that of his brethren ; certainly it is obvious at first sight that he would be naturally jealous of the influence of the old clergy, and keep them, *if possible*, at a distance from his people—I say if possible, because I doubt not many of them would be still secretly, at least, amongst their old flocks now enslaved, and thus I think not only keep Christianity alive amongst *them*, but also prepare the *settlers* for its reception. I must add one other remark, it is this :—if Gregory, at least, was actuated by nothing but purely honest, disinterested, Christian motives, why consign by a stroke of his pen all the English Bishops to the jurisdiction of a stranger ? One Archbishop was at the time in his palace at Caerleon-upon-Usk, the other two were probably yet alive. Yet he had no mercy on them ! *why* was this ?—But I leave the whole matter to the judgment of the reader.

* Pope Gregory's works, book 5, epistle 58.

(e) I have often been thinking (says Johnson,) that we could not do greater service to the Reformation, than by translating into English the *mass-book*, *breviary*, *pontifical*, *manual*, and *other service-books* of the Church of Rome, with brief annotations, shewing on the one hand, the *rise* of all that is *foolish* and *superstitious*, and, on the other, the *antiquity* of all that *remains good* and *commendable*, in them. It is certain that the leaders in the Church of Rome would with reason look upon it as a terrible blow given to them, if such translations could be published in all the vulgar tongues of Europe. For they themselves do industriously conceal their public devotions from the knowledge of the people, and have, with all their might, endeavoured to suppress all attempts of translating them; for they are sensible that great numbers of men would desert their worship, if they once came to the knowledge of all the *filth* and *corruption*, which lie hid under their unknown tongue. For true Popery is a thing of that nature, that there needs no other confutation of it, than the showing of it in a true light, upon supposition that the spectators are men of competent judgment, and that they are in any measure acquainted with their Bibles.—*Johnson's Collection*, *preface*, p. 12.

(f) *Scotia*, or *Scotland*, was a name first appropriated to *Ireland*, derived, the annalists tell us, from *Scota*, a Scythian princess, the daughter, some say, of the Pharaoh who was drowned in the Red Sea.—She was the wife of *Gathelus*, a Scythian king, who settled in Spain. But his sons, one of whom was called *Iber*, afterwards settled in *Ireland*, whence it was called *Scotia*, and the people *Scotts*, in honour of their mother, and *Hibernia*, from *Iber*, their leader and king. The island was certainly known to the Carthagenians and called by them *the sacred isle*, even from a very early period. The name *Ierne*, or *Iren*, as *Gildas* calls it, imports the same thing. It was still called *Scotia* in the eighth century.—“This” says *Bede*, after describing it in his first chapter, “is properly the native country of the *Scotts*, who having emigrated thence, and landed on the north part of the *Frith*, towards *Ireland*, settled there, and made a third nation in *Britain*, besides the *Picts* and *Britons*.” This settlement seems, on a balancing of all discrepant relations, to have been made late in the fifth century. They also occupied the neighbouring islands. And relating the labours of *Fursey*, in *East Anglia* he says, “*Fursey*, who was of the noble race of the *Scotts*, but himself more noble in the spirit than in the flesh, having preached many years in *Scotia*, left his native *Ireland*, came into *Britain* with a few companions, and built the noble monastery of *Cnobersburgh*, (*Burgh Castle*) in *Suffolk*.” Here *Scotia* and *Ireland* are plainly identified. “That the *Hibernians*,” says doctor *Mosheim*, “who were called *Scotts* in this century, (the 8th,) were lovers of learning, and distinguished themselves in these times of ignorance, by the culture of the sciences, above all the other European nations, travelling through the most distant lands, both with a view to improve and to communicate their knowledge, is a fact with which I have long been acquainted, as we see them in the most authentic records of antiquity discharging, with the highest reputation and applause, the functions of doctor, in *France*, *Germany*, and *Italy*, both during this, and the following century.”—*Eccles. Hist. of the Eighth Century*. In the year 565, *St. Columba*, of the blood royal of *Ireland*, fired with Christian zeal, left his native country, and embarked in the pious design of preaching the Gospel to the *Picts*, among whom some impression had already been made by *Ninnias*, a southern Briton. *Columba*, and his companions, settled in the island of *Hii*, or *Iona*, thence called *I-Colomb-Kill*, (i. e. the island of the cell of *Columba*.) The seminary of learning and divinity, established here by them, became the most famous then in Europe, and the parent, it is said, of 100 others, all acknowledging its supremacy.—“Hence it was,” says *Johnson*, “that northern clans, and roving barbarians, derived the blessings of knowledge and religion,” and I need scarcely add, thence also it was, that *Oswald*, and the other kings of the *Heptarchy*, drew the pious, learned, and zealous missionaries that converted the Saxon pagans, and restored Christianity throughout England.

